

Gathering Question: In some restaurants, at the end of the meal, the waiter brings an entire tray full of luscious desserts, places them in front of you and describes them one by one. Why is this a more effective form of “temptation” than simply providing you with a dessert menu?

The Devil’s Strategy

One of C.S. Lewis’s most popular books, *The Screwtape Letters*, is a collection of letters from a senior devil, Screwtape, to his apprentice devil, Wormwood. Throughout their correspondence, Screwtape instructs his young pupil in the diabolical craft of leading a person to temptation and ruin. Their ultimate goal is to ensnare their victim eternally so that they can deliver him or her to their “father’s” house. Even though the characters are fanciful and the conversations are entertaining, they lead a person to consider a sobering fact: Satan is the master of temptation.

Satan tempts us constantly and just because a person has made the decision to follow Christ does not mean that he or she is exempt from Satan’s schemes. He does employ schemes or strategies to trip us up, to discourage us, and to lead us into sin. He is the deceiver. He wants nothing more than to have you and me in his trap. If you look closely at his work in the past as described by the Bible, you can see how he does his work.

One place we can go to see it clearly is near the beginning of our Bibles. In Genesis 3, we have the account of Satan’s first temptation on humankind. Unfortunately Satan was successful in his attack on the woman and the man and they both took the bait and sinned against God. There is a process involved in the way Satan attacked Adam and Eve and it is important that we all discover the process so that we can stop it before we find ourselves captured by his schemes.

Sin is at its essence a heart problem. Before you ever see the manifestations on the outside of the human being sin is festering on the inside. When it finally does explode onto the surface, sin has the potential to destroy relationships and destroy lives. It is essential that we learn to stop the destructive pattern in our lives.

Read:

Genesis 3:1-6; James 1:13-15

Reflect:

1. What did Satan hope to accomplish when he asked Eve, “Did God really say?” Do you think he accomplished what he set out to accomplish? Explain.
2. How can doubting God make us targets for temptation and sin? Do you think Eve doubted God? If yes, what did she doubt about Him?
3. See if you can identify the progressive steps that led Eve to sin. List them. At what point did Eve sin? Do the same with the James 1 passage.